

Proclamation 6280 of April 25, 1991

National Day of Prayer, 1991

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

While we owe constant praise to Almighty God, we Americans have added cause for thanksgiving on this National Day of Prayer because of the recent coalition victory in the Persian Gulf. However, our joy and gratitude are inspired by far more than military triumph; on this special day of prayer held in the 200th year of our Bill of Rights, we give thanks for America's long and abiding legacy of freedom.

During the past 200 years, the ideals enshrined in our Bill of Rights have gained favor around the world. Even where tyrants have sought to rule by repression and terror, the spirit of freedom has endured. This is because, as Alexander Hamilton once noted, "the Sacred Rights of Mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the Hand of the Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power." Almighty God has granted each of us free will and inscribed in our hearts the unalienable dignity and worth that come from being made in His image.

Because our dignity and freedom are gifts of our Creator, we have a duty to cherish them, always using the latter to choose life and goodness. On this occasion we do well to pray for the wisdom and the resolve to do just that.

As an elevation of the soul's eyes to Heaven, prayer helps us to distinguish between liberty and license—to recognize that which is the grateful exercise of free will and that which is its corruption. Through prayer, we turn our hearts toward their real home and, in so doing, gain a sense of proper direction and higher purpose.

Faith and prayer are as important to guiding the conduct of nations as they are to individuals. We Americans, Abraham Lincoln once wrote, "have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven." A nation so richly blessed has equally great responsibilities. Indeed, we have recently been reminded that "much will be asked of those to whom much has been given." The crucible of war has once again tested our Nation's character, and it has shown us both the need for and the power of prayer.

On this National Day of Prayer, let us acknowledge with heartfelt remorse the many times we have failed to appreciate the Lord's gifts and to obey His Commandments. Giving humble thanks for His mercy, let us vow to fulfill not only our responsibilities but also our potential as one Nation under God. Most important, let us make our prayers pleasing to Him by the regular practice of public and private virtue and by a genuine renewal of America's moral heritage. As Scripture says, "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

Since the approval of the joint resolution of the Congress on April 17, 1952, calling for the designation of a specific day to be set aside each year as a National Day of Prayer, recognition of such a day has become a cherished annual event. Each President since then has pro-

claimed a National Day of Prayer annually under the authority of that resolution, continuing a tradition that dates back to the Continental Congress. By Public Law 100-307, the first Thursday in May of each year has been set aside as a National Day of Prayer.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 2, 1991, as a National Day of Prayer. I urge all Americans to gather together on that day in homes and places of worship to pray, each after his or her own manner, for God's continued blessing on our families and our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 25 day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6281 of April 25, 1991

National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week, 1991 and 1992

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Through organ and tissue transplantation, thousands of Americans have been given the chance to enjoy fuller, longer lives. For example, bone marrow transplants have brought hope and healing to victims of cancer; new corneas have helped to bring sight to the blind; and the gift of a new heart, lung, or kidney has enabled many gravely ill Americans to gain improved health.

Much has been done in recent years to encourage public support of organ and tissue donation. Millions of Americans have learned about transplants through regional and local donor programs, voluntary health agencies, and the media. Government grants and our national transplantation system have also helped to encourage organ and tissue donation. Many Americans have responded to public awareness campaigns by signing a donor card or by indicating on their driver's licenses their willingness to donate.

However, despite our best efforts and the development of worldwide transplant programs, the waiting list of those in need of donated organs or tissues continues to grow. The Department of Health and Human Services reports that a new name is added to our national waiting list every 30 minutes. As many as 25 percent of the patients waiting for specific organs will die before a well-matched donor is found.

As compelling as these facts are, it is both fitting and proper that we pause to reflect carefully on organ and tissue transplantation. Every donation is a profound act of personal sacrifice and generosity. Every transplant underscores the power of medicine and the precious nature of human life. Because God has granted every person equal dignity and worth, because human life must always be treated with reverence and care, all Americans should give careful thought to becoming organ and